

Insurance Coverage for Children with Craniofacial Anomalies

The Issue: According to the Surgeon General's September 2000 report, *Oral Health in America*, craniofacial anomalies affect an estimated one in 600 children every year in America. The most widely known craniofacial conditions are cleft lip and palate. Unfortunately, corrective procedures to address craniofacial anomalies are usually not covered by private insurers because they are classified as cosmetic. Legislation has been introduced that would expand private payer coverage of craniofacial anomalies by differentiating between cosmetic and reconstructive surgery and requiring managed care and insurance companies to do the same. The legislation reflects the American Medical Association (AMA) definition of reconstructive surgery as that being performed on abnormal structures of the body, caused by congenital defects, developmental abnormalities, trauma, infection, tumors or disease. Cosmetic surgery, in contrast, is defined by the AMA as being performed to reshape normal structures of the body in order to improve the patient's appearance and self-esteem.

The Impact: Craniofacial anomalies may "appear" to be only cosmetic, but this condition often impedes a child's daily functioning, such as chewing food and normal speech. An increasing number of insurance companies are denying access to reconstructive surgery for children with craniofacial deformities because they do not consider treatment for the condition to be medically necessary. While many oral and maxillofacial surgeons and other specialists who treat children with craniofacial disorders frequently donate their time and services to help children whose families otherwise cannot afford treatment, this should be a covered service for insured patients.

What We Hope to Accomplish: The American Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons (AAOMS) requests Members of Congress to co-sponsor the "Children's Access to Reconstructive Evaluation and Surgery Act" or the "CARES Act" (HR 1655/S. 1588) to protect and promote access to treatment for childhood deformities and craniofacial abnormalities such as cleft lip and palate.

S. 1588

Sponsor: [Sen Landrieu, Mary L.](#) [LA] (introduced 6/11/2007)

COSPONSORS (11)

[Sen Bayh, Evan](#) [IN] - 6/11/2007

[Sen Cardin, Benjamin L.](#) [MD] - 6/20/2007

[Sen Coleman, Norm](#) [MN] - 6/11/2007

[Sen Lugar, Richard G.](#) [IN] - 6/11/2007

[Sen Snowe, Olympia J.](#) [ME] - 6/11/2007

[Sen Stabenow, Debbie](#) [MI] - 6/11/2007

[Sen Brown, Sherrod](#) [OH] - 11/8/2007

[Sen Cochran, Thad](#) [MS] - 6/11/2007

[Sen Kennedy, Edward M.](#) [MA] - 6/20/2007

[Sen Smith, Gordon H.](#) [OR] - 6/21/2007

[Sen Specter, Arlen](#) [PA] - 6/27/2007

Latest Major Action: 6/11/2007 Referred to Senate committee.

Status: Read twice and referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

H.R. 1655

Sponsor: [Rep McCarthy, Carolyn](#) [NY-4] (introduced 3/22/2007)

COSPONSORS (57)

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[Rep Capuano, Michael E.](#) [MA-8] - 5/1/2007
[Rep Carnahan, Russ](#) [MO-3] - 4/23/2007
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[Rep Cramer, Robert E. \(Bud\), Jr.](#) [AL-5] - 9/24/2007
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[Rep Israel, Steve](#) [NY-2] - 8/3/2007
[Rep Jones, Stephanie Tubbs](#) [OH-11] - 5/10/2007
[Rep Lowey, Nita M.](#) [NY-18] - 8/3/2007
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[Rep McDermott, Jim](#) [WA-7] - 3/22/2007
[Rep Norton, Eleanor Holmes](#) [DC] - 6/20/2007
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[Rep Rush, Bobby L.](#) [IL-1] - 3/29/2007
[Rep Schakowsky, Janice D.](#) [IL-9] - 9/4/2007
[Rep Shays, Christopher](#) [CT-4] - 12/4/2007
[Rep Souder, Mark E.](#) [IN-3] - 10/30/2007
[Rep Tiberi, Patrick J.](#) [OH-12] - 3/22/2007
[Rep Towns, Edolphus](#) [NY-10] - 6/20/2007
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[Rep Coble, Howard](#) [NC-6] - 3/22/2007
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[Rep Gerlach, Jim](#) [PA-6] - 4/25/2007
[Rep Grijalva, Raul M.](#) [AZ-7] - 3/29/2007
[Rep Hirono, Mazie K.](#) [HI-2] - 6/6/2007
[Rep Honda, Michael M.](#) [CA-15] - 9/17/2007
[Rep Inslee, Jay](#) [WA-1] - 3/22/2007
[Rep Johnson, Eddie Bernice](#) [TX-30] - 9/10/2007
[Rep King, Peter T.](#) [NY-3] - 6/20/2007
[Rep Maloney, Carolyn B.](#) [NY-14] - 3/22/2007
[Rep McCotter, Thaddeus G.](#) [MI-11] - 3/5/2008
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[Rep Rangel, Charles B.](#) [NY-15] - 4/23/2007
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[Rep Scott, Robert C. "Bobby"](#) [VA-3] - 5/10/2007
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[Rep Spratt, John M., Jr.](#) [SC-5] - 7/23/2007
[Rep Tierney, John F.](#) [MA-6] - 9/24/2007
[Rep Wamp, Zach](#) [TN-3] - 9/24/2007

Latest Major Action: 6/27/2007 Referred to House subcommittee.

Status: Referred to the Subcommittee on Health, Employment, Labor, and Pensions.